

Two 'robbers' killed in Hatiya 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Two alleged leaders of a robber gang were killed in a gunfight with Rab at Hatiya upazila in Noakhali yesterday.

The two dead were identified as Saiful, 35 and his deputy Shafique, 24.

Saiful was the son of late Ali Ahmed of Kalirchar village in the upazila while Shafique was a son of Dulal Majhi of the same area.

The "gunfight" happened near Chatlar Ghat in Boyar Char of Hatiya early Monday morning. Rab-11 CPC-3 Laxmipur camp's senior assistant police superintendent Md Jasim Uddin Chowdhury said, acting on a tip off a Rab team raided the area. Saiful's accomplices opened fire on the Rab team and the elite force retaliated, he said.

Rab assistant sub-inspector (ASI) Mofizul and Constable Mahbub were injured in the fire exchange. The injured have been admitted to Noakhali 250-bed General Hospital, he said.

Rab recovered six foreign- and locally-made guns, 10 mobile phones and Tk 54,000 cash from the spot.

Saiful with his gang had been robbing fishing boats in the Meghna river and the Bay of Bengal for a long time. They also used to kidnap fishermen for ransom, Rab officials said.

He was accused in nine cases filed with Hatiya Police Station.

The bodies have been sent to the Noakhali hospital for autopsy.

CID arrests 8

FROM PAGE 16 University, is also a member of the gang. Molla Nazrul Islam, special superintendent of CID, said at a press briefing at the CID headquarters in Malibagh yesterday.

The two earned a hefty amount of money leaking question papers. The gang used to take Tk 2-5 lakh from each admission seeker and help them get into public universities illegally, the CID official said.

The other arrestees got into different DU departments by allegedly forging admission tests under the academic session 2016-17.

Tanvir Ahmed Mallick, Bayezid, Nahid Iftekhar, Fardin Ahmed Sabbir, Prasenjit Das, Rifat Hossain and Azizul Hakim were arrested yesterday.

At the briefing, the CID disclosed the arrest of Tonoy, 24, at Rangpur on November 14, and Akash, 19, at Gazipur on Friday.

The CID official said they learnt about Tonoy from other arrestees who were held in a case filed in connection with the question paper leak of DU "Gha" unit entrance test on October 20.

"Tonoy told us that he helped some students get admitted to public universities, including DU, in 2015 and 2016 illegally. They leaked question papers from the exam centre by using electronic devices before the exams began," the CID official said quoting Tonoy.

As per Tonoy's information, the seven DU students were detained, he added.

Contacted, DU Proctor Prof AKM Golam Rabbani told The Daily Star that they would take action against the seven students after investigating the matter.

On October 20, two Chhatra League leaders -- Mohiuddin Rana, an assistant secretary of the BCL central committee, and Abdullah Al Mamun, theatre and debate affairs secretary of the BCL's Amar Ekushey Hall unit -- were arrested along with an admission seeker in connection with DU "Gha" unit exams question paper leak.

Rana was later expelled from the BCL.

A case was lodged with Shahbagh Police Station accusing the three under the public exams law and ICT act.

Based on their information, the CID arrested one Nafi, a private university student, on November 1, and another Anin Chowdhury on November 3, CID official Nazrul said.

All the five have given confessional statements, he added.

Earlier, Amar Ekushey Hall BCL leader Mamun told this newspaper that he got question papers of entrance exams of some public universities from Moshir Rahman Sameer, a fourth-year student of psychology and also a vice-president of the Chhatra League Amar Ekushey Hall unit.

"Mamun and Sameer work for Tonoy," a CID official said, adding that this was a big gang which worked in different phases to leak question papers of different public universities' entrance tests.

Meanwhile, expelled BCL leader Rana earlier said one Alip Biswas, a former BCL leader of Dhaka College unit, now an employee of Bangladesh Krira Shikkha Protishtan (BKSP) in Savar, was running the gang and "helping" the admission seekers cheat.

Alip, a key suspect, is on the run.

Why spend time

FROM PAGE 1

arrested. Hearings on the cases of death row convicts are also pending. Why do courts spend time on such trivial issues instead of disposing of those cases?" she said.

The premier made the statement after Jatiya Party lawmaker Kazi Firoz Rashid drew the attention of Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid to a writ petition filed with the High Court on the PEC and JSC exams.

Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond submitted the writ petition in July last year, saying that the government was empowered under the Intermediate and Secondary Education Ordinance, 1961, only to hold secondary and higher secondary certificate exams.

The government was not allowed to hold JSC exams, he said, adding that schoolteachers were engaged in coaching business due to the introduction of the exams.

After hearing the petition, the HC in September last year issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain in four weeks why the government's decision to hold JSC exams should not be declared illegal.

Firoz yesterday blasted the education minister for continuing Junior School Certificate (JSC) and Primary Education Completion (PEC) exams, saying such a system was "illegal and unconstitutional".

"As the matter is now sub judice, the

government can't take such exams until the writ petition is disposing of," he told Jatiya Sangsad.

Participating in the unscheduled discussion, Hasina said, "I am responsible for the PEC and JSC exams. I've introduced the system as teachers used to pick only a few students of classes V and VIII for scholarship exams, which was discriminatory for other students of those classes."

The PM said the teachers used to focus their attention on those few selected students, but some meritorious students might be left out.

"That's why I introduced the system so that all students can take such exams."

About the SSC exams, she said many students feared sitting for the exams.

"But the PEC and JSC exams help them overcome the fear of exams," Hasina said, adding that the certificates also help them gaining confidence.

The Leader of the House said she was very surprised to hear such words from the JP lawmaker against the PEC and JSC exams.

Referring to the writ petition, she said, "I don't know what would be the court's verdict. It will be unfortunate if it goes against the PEC and JSC exams."

The premier said a section of people "love to file writ petitions on whatever issues they have" and the courts spend time on hearing those petitions.

maker walked free from jail before serving his jail term. Since Arzu has good relations with Sakhawat, the lawmaker filed nine cases against Arzu of "false allegations".

Asked whether he discussed the matter with the AL high-ups, Arzu said he informed party General Secretary Obaidul Quader about it on Monday. Quader assured him of resolving the issue.

Sakhawat Hossain and Tanvir Hasan, general secretary of Feni District Tanti League, were present at the press conference.

Despite repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach Nizam Hazari for comments as his two phones were found switched off.

Some Feni AL leaders also refused to make any comment on the allegations against the MP.

2 cops held

FROM PAGE 16

the Tk 12,000 he had on him and threatened to kill him if they did not get Tk 3 lakh.

Zakir was told to call his relatives and ask them to transfer the money to two mobile banking accounts, the plaintiff said.

His relatives paid Tk 93,000 in 11 transactions, following which the accused left Zakir in Puniout area of Brahmanbaria town, read the case statement.

Officer-in-Charge Nabir Hossain of Brahmanbaria Sadar Model Police Station said the two policemen and the woman were arrested and sent to court yesterday afternoon.

Meanwhile, five policemen of Nimati Naval Police outpost at Bahkerganj of Barisal have been sued for demanding bribes from fishermen of Palat and Baria villages in Jhalakathi, reports our correspondent in Jhalakathi.

Manik Acharjo, the fishermen's lawyer, said the case was filed Monday afternoon with Jhalakathi Special Judge Court.

He said a police team led by the Sub-Inspector Atikur Rahman demanded Tk 1,500 bribe from each fishing boat on Bishakhali river. The fishermen were told they would not be able to fish if they did not pay.

Abdul Mannan Khan, a fisherman of the area and also a petitioner of the case, said around 100 people live on fishing there.

"If we don't pay toll according to the policemen's demand, our fishing boats are taken away and then we have to pay Tk 5,000 to get our boats back," he said.

On November 15, a police team went to the house of Nuruzzaman and his brother Abdul Mannan and demanded Tk 1.50 lakh weekly bribe, said Mannan.

Police picked up Nuruzzaman as he refused to pay, he said.

The policemen also demanded two maunds of hilsa which the fishermen also refused, leading to an altercation with the police, he said.

Police, later, filed a case against the fishermen with Rajapur Police station.

The court fixed November 29 for a hearing on the case, the lawyer said.

Police later released Nuruzzaman after he allegedly paid Tk 20,000, sources claimed.

Refuting all allegations, accused sub-inspector Atikur Rahman said they had gone on a drive against Jatka fishing and the fishermen attacked him.

He said police arrested two fishermen and recovered 3,000 metres of current net from them.

Five policemen were injured in the incident, he claimed.

Bangladeshis

FROM PAGE 16

Anti-Corruption Commission, National Board of Revenue and Attorney General Office, was needed to collect specific information about the names of individuals and companies surfaced in the Paradise Papers and to bring back the laundered money.

In the statement, TIB also expressed frustration as no effective measures were taken after the names of several Bangladeshis had surfaced in the Panama Papers.

He claimed that huge amounts of money have been laundered out of the country mainly to dodge taxes, taking advantage of the existing corruption-friendly legal and organisation structures at home and abroad and this has huge impact on the national economy.

One of the main responsibilities of the authorities concerned of the government was to take effective measure to stop money laundering and bring those involved with this to book, irrespective of their identities and positions, he said.

Iftekhazurazzaman also said many famed banks and accounting companies were involved in the vested quarter and against this backdrop, laundered money has to be brought back through coordination among local organisations concerned and taking assistance of different international laws and organisations, including the United Nations' anti-corruption conventions.

Although it seemed difficult to bring the laundered money back and bring those involved to book, TIB thinks it is not impossible.

Willingness and effective measures from the government and the organisations concerned is needed to ensure that to happen, added the release.

Two 'ABT' men'

FROM PAGE 2

Indian card called Aadhar was recovered from Samad. "We are trying to find out where and how he got the Aadhaar card done," Sharma said. According to Kolkata police, specific inputs were received from India's Intelligence Bureau about the movements of the arrested trio.

The Bangladeshi duo had come to Kolkata not only to buy arms but also to indoctrinate sympathisers and lure youths to form a module. Hand-written papers with names such as 'Esplanade Bus Stand' and 'Eden Gardens' were found in their possession, along with a 7.32 mm pistol, a single shot pistol, a laptop, a number of pen drives and several books and documents related to Al-Qaeda, Sharma said.

Police also found that the Bangladeshi nationals had visited a number of chemical shops in Kolkata and were enquiring about chemicals specifically used for making explosives. Many visiting cards of such shops were also recovered from them.

Talks on track

FROM PAGE 1

Kyi yesterday hoped to strike a deal with Bangladesh by this week on the "safe and voluntary return" of the Rohingyaas who fled to Bangladesh since August 25.

"Nothing can be done overnight, but we believe that we will be able to make steady progress," she said.

Turning to the question of repatriation of the Rohingyaas, Suu Kyi said discussions would be held with the Bangladesh foreign minister today and tomorrow.

She, however, said it was hard to tell exactly how close Myanmar and Bangladesh were to an agreement.

"We hope that this would result in an MoU signed quickly, which would enable us to start the safe and voluntarily return of all of those who have gone across the border," Suu Kyi said at the end of a meeting of senior officials at an Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Myanmar's capital Naypyitaw, reports Reuters.

In response to a question about human rights violations, Suu Kyi told reporters, "We can't say whether it has happened or not. As a responsibility of the government, we have to make sure that it won't happen."

She said Myanmar would follow the framework of an agreement reached in the 1990s to cover the earlier repatriation of Rohingyaas.

"It's on the basis of residency...this was agreed by the two governments long time ago with success, so this will be the formula we will continue to follow," added Suu Kyi.

Dhaka, however, has not agreed to Naypyitaw's proposal to follow the principle and criteria of the 1992 deal to take back the forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals.

On October 9, Mahmood Ali told foreign diplomats in Dhaka that the 1992 criteria are not "realistic".

He said the situation of 1992 and the present one are "entirely different" as most of the Muslim villages in the northern Rakhine State have been burned down this time, and the identi-

fication of Rohingyaas based on residency in Rakhine would not be realistic.

On April 28, 1992, Bangladesh signed a joint statement with the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) of Myanmar under which Myanmar agreed to the return of those refugees who could "establish their bona fide residency in Myanmar" prior to their departure for Bangladesh.

Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque and some key officials of the foreign ministry left Dhaka for Naypyitaw yesterday to take part in the negotiation over the repatriation deal.

"It is now almost certain that a deal will be signed," said a key foreign ministry official, seeking anonymity.

Dhaka will strongly press for the UN's inclusion in the repatriation process, added the official.

Myanmar, however, does not want the presence of the UN or any other international organisations in the repatriation process.

The UN and the international community have been calling for the safe, voluntary and sustainable repatriation of the Myanmar nationals to their places of origin.

Bangladesh, which has also made the same call, is now desperate to send back the Myanmar nationals at any cost.

"Of course, we want safe, dignified and sustainable return of the refugees to their homeland. But above all, we want their quick repatriation," said a foreign ministry official on condition of anonymity.

At a press briefing at the UN headquarters on Monday, Farhan Haq, deputy spokesperson for the UN secretary-general, said the number of Rohingya refugees, who have fled to Bangladesh from Myanmar since August 25, has reached 621,000.

"They are arriving traumatised and destitute, with more than half living in a single camp in Cox's Bazar," he said.

Bangladesh had seen influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar also in 1978, 1991 and 2012.

Tantamount to apartheid

FROM PAGE 2

campaign has restricted virtually all aspects of Rohingyaas' lives, the Amnesty study says, confining the Muslim minority to a "ghetto-like" existence in the mainly Buddhist country.

The 100-page report, based on two years of research, says the web of controls meet the legal standard of the "crime against humanity of apartheid".

"Rakhine State is a crime scene. This was the case long before the vicious campaign of military violence of the last three months," said Anna Neistat, Amnesty's senior director for research.

Myanmar's authorities "are keeping Rohingya women, men and children segregated and cowed in a dehumanising system of apartheid," she added.

The basis for the widespread hatred towards the Muslim group comes from a contentious 1982 Citizenship law.

Enacted by the then-junta, it effectively made hundreds of thousands of Rohingyaas stateless.

Since then, Amnesty says, a "deliberate campaign" has been waged to deny the Rohingyaas' right to live in Myanmar, where they are denigrated as "Bengalis" or illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

A system of identification cards is central to those bureaucratic controls, with Rohingya routinely issued one form of ID, only to see it later rendered meaningless.

"This is a system designed to make people hopeless," said Laura Haigh, Amnesty's Myanmar researcher.

She raised concerns that paperwork may be used to restrict the number of Rohingyaas returnees. Myanmar authorities have said they must be subject to a "verification" process.

"A lot of the burden of proof is going to be put on refugees, to prove that they are from Myanmar," said

Haigh. "The government has records of these people, it's just choosing not to acknowledge them."

'OPEN-AIR PRISON'

The latest wave of persecution has pushed more than half of the 1.1-million strong minority out of the country, with those left behind sequestered in increasingly isolated and vulnerable villages.

Although the Rohingya have been victims of discrimination for decades, the report details how repression intensified after an outbreak of violence between Buddhist and Muslim communities in 2012.

Long before the recent exodus of Rohingya from northern Rakhine state -- now a virtual ghostland of torched villages and unharvested paddy fields -- they were unable to travel freely, requiring special permits and facing arrest, abuse and harassment at numerous checkpoints, Amnesty said.

In central Rakhine state, Rohingya Muslims were driven out of urban areas after the 2012 violence.

They remain completely segregated from the Buddhist community, confined by barbed wire and police checkpoints to camps which Amnesty likens to an "open-air prison".

The community has been widely denied access to medical care, their children cannot attend government schools and many mosques have been sealed off, the rights watchdog documented.

"Restoring the rights and legal status of Rohingya and amending the country's discriminatory citizenship laws is urgently needed," said Amnesty's Neistat.

"Rohingya who have fled persecution in Myanmar cannot be asked to return to a system of apartheid."

House of knowledge

FROM PAGE 16

open from 1:00 to 5:00pm, attracts around 150 readers daily. Its collection has grown to include 800 books on literature, science and history. Three Bengali daily newspapers are kept.

"This library is playing a vital role in my life," says college student, Mukul Roy, 20. "I visit the library every day to read books and newspapers. I'm so glad to be a member of it."

"Many students come here," says another college student from nearby Sarpukur village, Abdul Jalil Shanto, 19. "We want to improve our knowledge through reading. The library's founder is my junior but I salute him. He worked hard to set it up."

Schoolgirl Khadiza Akhter, 13, from Tiparabazar village is one of many school students who regularly visit. "The library helps us to use our leisure time wisely," she says.

"Jamal Bhai's library is playing a great role in enlightening us," says schoolboy Rumon Ali, 14. "Of course we're thrilled to have such a facility in our village."

Parents and teachers are equally impressed. "Our children are safe from antisocial activities because in their

free time they are busy reading in the library," says one local guardian, Pabitra Chandra Roy, 55. "We do our level best to help the library."

"It's not only the students," observes schoolteacher Shamsul Alam, 48, "many teachers also use the library. It's become a place not only to gain new knowledge, but to share it too."

Naturally, the library is an ongoing project. Some of the sheeting of the tin shed that accommodates the library are damaged and ideally could be replaced. There are as yet no desks or chairs. More books and newspapers wouldn't go astray. And while there is an electricity connection, the library has no ceiling fan.

"The needs of the library have been discussed among our library members," says Jamal. "We hope to further develop it. I will spend my own money and also collect funds from other library members and locals as I can."

Yet even at its current stage of development, Jamal is rightly pleased. "I feel proud when I see students busy reading books and newspapers," he says.